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A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

FUNERAL

OF

Capt. John Briggs,

At *Dunſtable*, March 23, 169⅘.

By THOMAS HARRISON.

ISAIAH LVII. 1.

The Righteous periſheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and merciful Men are taken away, none conſidering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come.

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MDCXCV.

UMI

The Epiſtle Dedicatory,

To Mrs. *ELIZABETH BRIGGS*,

Widow of the Deceaſed Capt. JOHN BRIGGS.

MADAM,

THE Meanneſs of the following Diſcourſe would have been an effectual Bar to its Publication, had not your Deſire uſher'd it into the World. The firſt thing of mine that came forth from the Preſs was a Sermon, occaſioned by the Deceaſe of your beloved Daughter; and I concluded you would not take it well, if I denied you the liberty of reading that Diſcourſe which was preached at your Husband's Funeral, in a fairer Character than mine own Hand-writing. Beſides, that Divine Bleſſing which I hope attended the Publication of the former, gave me the greater Encouragement to expoſe the latter to publick View. I

am not ſo vain as to think printing this Sermon will advance my Reputation among Learned and Judicious Readers, it is more likely to produce a contrary Effect; but if God ſhould bleſs it to the Converſion of one Sinner, or the building up of one Saint, I hope I ſhall rejoice more than if I gained the greateſt Applauſe thereby. Tho it be not Meat for ſtrong Men, yet I hope it may be Milk for Babes. To conclude, That he who hath promiſed to be an Husband to the Widow, and a Father to the Fatherleſs, would put his Everlaſting Arms under you, and ſanctify all the Diſpenſations of his Providence to you; that he would ſhower down the choiceſt of his Bleſſings upon you and the Fruit of your Womb; that your Children may tread in the ſteps of their deceaſed Father, and their living Mother, is the ſincere Deſire of your Friend and Servant,

THO. HARRISON.

A SERMON preach'd at the Funeral of Capt. *JOHN BRIGGS.*

2 COR. v. 1.

For we know, that if our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.

MAN *is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upward.* Various are the Miſeries and Calamities which attend the Human Race during their Continuance in, and Pilgrimage through the waſte and howling Wilderneſs of this World. And ſincere Chriſtians are ſo far from obtaining an Immunity and Freedom from Temporal Evils while in a Mortal State, that they generally have the greateſt ſhare of them: But they have thoſe Cordials to ſupport and revive their Spirits under the Preſſure of Afflictive Providences, whereof others are wholly deſtitute. We need look no further for an Inſtance of this, than the Chapter preceding that which my Text begins; wherein the Apoſtle having mentioned thoſe Suf-

ferings which himſelf and his Brethren underwent, for their ſtedfaſt Adherence to, and Endeavours to propagate the ever-bleſſed Goſpel, he gives an Account of thoſe things which afforded them Comfort and Support under ſuch deplorable Circumſtances, whereof the hope of future Glory was not the leaſt, which he propoſes in the cloſe of that Chapter, and farther proſecutes in the words of my Text, *For we know, that if our*, &c.

The Method that I ſhall take in ſpeaking to theſe Words ſhall be,

I. To explain them.
II. To apply them.

I. I ſhall explain them: And in order to a regular and diſtinct Explication of them, I ſhall take notice of theſe four following things contain'd in them.

Firſt; A Deſcription of the State and Condition of the Human Body in this Life; *Our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle.*

Secondly; An implicit Aſſertion of its Diſſolution; *If it were diſſolved.*

Thirdly; A Deſcription of the bleſſed State and Habitation of the Saints after the Diſſolution of their Bodies: *We have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Fourthly; The comfortable Knowledg and Aſſurance which the Apoſtle and other Chriſtians had concerning their preſent Right to, and future Fruition of this Bleſſedneſs, *We know.*

Firſt;

Firſt; A Deſcription of the State and Condition of the Human Body in this Life; *Our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle.*

That this is a Deſcription of the Body in its Mortal State, is evident both from the Text and Context. Tho the Apoſtle here ſpeaks particularly of Believers, yet what is ſaid concerning the preſent Frame and Condition of their Bodies, is applicable to the Corporeal Part of all Mankind. The Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle, or, this Earthly Houſe or Tabernacle: For when two ſynonymous Words are made uſe of in the Deſcription of the ſame thing, the latter is ſometimes put in the Genitive Caſe, inſtead of their being joined together by the Conjunction *or*; thus *Numb.* 19. 2. *This is the Ordinance of the Law*, i. e. this is the Ordinance or Law, and in ſeveral other places. More particularly, there are two things obſervable in this part of the Text.

1*ſt*. The things to which he compares Man's Body, *viz.* an Houſe and a Tabernacle.

2*dly*. The Epithet which he gives it, *Earthly.*

1*ſt*. The things to which he compares Man's Body, *viz.* an Houſe or a Tabernacle; for theſe words muſt not be taken in a Proper and Literal, but in a Figurative and Metaphorical Senſe.

Firſt; He compares it to an Houſe. This Denomination is given to Human Bodies, *Job* 4. 19. they are called Houſes of Clay. The Body may be compared to an Houſe for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe of the Curioſity of its Structure. Some Art and Skill muſt be exerciſed in building an Houſe, that

all its Parts may be commodious, and bear a due and comely Proportion to each other. The Divine Architect hath diſplayed his Wiſdom as well as his Power in the Formation of the Human Body: We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and our Subſtance was curiouſly wrought, *Pſal.* 139. 14, 15. Tho it is made of a vile Material, yet it hath a noble and excellent Form, yea the Matter it ſelf is ſublimated and refined: There is nothing wanting that is neceſſary for uſe, and there is nothing ſuperfluous or unuſeful. But I ſhall not now anatomize the Human Body, lead you into all the Rooms of this ſtately and compact Fabrick, or ſhew you the Curioſity of every Part.

2. Becauſe it is an Habitation for the Soul. Man is ſaid to dwell in this Houſe of Clay, *Job* 4. 19. I conceive *Man* is here by a Synecdoche put for the Soul, which is the ſuperiour Part of Man. The Soul dwells in the Body as an Inhabitant in an Houſe, only with this difference, there is a formal Union between the Soul and Body, which there is not between a Man and the Houſe wherein he dwells. And the Body in this reſpect bears a Reſemblance to an Houſe in three things.

(1.) In its Inferiority to the Soul in Worth and Excellence. As a Man is of more Worth than the moſt ſtately and coſtly Palace that can be inhabited by him; ſo is the Soul of more Value than the Body wherein it reſides, and which is inform'd by it. In the Body there are viſible Footſteps of God, but the Divine Image is ſtampt and pourtray'd upon the Soul. The Image of God in Man conſiſts not in what is ſeen, but in what is not ſeen: God expreſly ſaith, that none ſaw a Similitude of him, *Deut.* 4. 15. which had not been true, if Man in regard of his Body had been the Image and Similitude of God; for then a Figure of God had been ſeen every day, as often as we ſaw a Man,

Man, or beheld our ſelves. Tho many of the Children of Men are deſtitute of God's Moral Image, conſiſting in Knowledg, Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, yet every Human Soul bears his Natural Image in its ſpiritual Nature and Properties. Surely the more remote from Matter, and the more like to the ſupream Spirit any Being is, the greater is its Excellency.

(2.) In its Uſefulneſs and Subſerviency to the Soul. As the Houſe is erected for the uſe of the Inhabitant, and the ſeveral Rooms thereof are prepared for his Service, and all the Affairs therein are managed and conducted by him; ſo the Body was framed for the Service of the Soul, tho Sin often renders it injurious to its noble Inhabitant. The Motions of the Bodily Members are all directed and guided by that Intelligent Spirit which is ſeated in it.

(3.) In the Independence of the Soul upon the Body, as to its Operations and Exiſtence. An Inhabitant can act without, and may exiſt ſeparate from his Habitation. There are many Operations of the Soul while it lodges in the Body, which it puts forth independently from the Body, and whereto the Corporeal Part doth not at all concur. And when the Soul ſhall be diſlodged from this Dwelling-place, it will ſtill have an Exiſtence. This noble Inhabitant ſhall not be buried in the Ruines of that Earthly Tabernacle. Tho the Life of the Man is deſtroy'd by the Separation of the Soul from the Body, becauſe it conſiſts in their Union; yet the Life of the Soul, which hath no Dependence on ſuch an Union, is not deſtroy'd thereby. The Soul animates the Body, but the Body conveys no Life to the Soul.

Secondly; The Body is compared to a Tabernacle.

The Apoſtle *Peter* gives the ſame Denomination to his Body, 2 *Pet.* 1. 13, 14. *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I*

am

am in this Tabernacle, to ſtir you up, by putting you in Remembrance: Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle.

And the Body may be compared to a Tabernacle for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe of the ſhort continuance of the Soul in it. A Tabernacle is oppoſed to a fix'd Habitation, *Heb.* 11. 9. They who only ſojourned in a place, and were ſpeedily to remove from it, did in former times erect Tabernacles for themſelves. Indeed our Bodies are rather Tabernacles wherein we ſojourn for a little time, than Houſes wherein we have a fix'd Habitation: We are Pilgrims and Strangers in the Earth; our immortal Souls will ſoon take their flight from our Bodies. We often read of the Brevity of Man's Life in the Holy Scriptures. *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few Days, and full of Trouble. He cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down: he fleeth alſo as a Shadow, and continueth not*; Job 14. 1, 2. Man's Life is compared to a Vapour, which ſoon vaniſheth, *James* 4. 14. to Smoke which quickly diſappears, *Pſal.* 102. 3. to the Graſs which is withered by the Summer Sun, or cut down by the ſharp Scythe, *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7. it is ſaid to be ſwifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, which quickly runneth from one ſide of the Web to the other; its Motion is repreſented by the telling of a Tale, the ſailing of a Ship in the mighty Ocean, and the flight of an Eagle towards its Prey: It is compared to an Hand's breadth, yea to nothing, *Pſal.* 39. 5. How ſhort is the Life of Man in this World if compared with the eternal Duration of God, or with the Life which we ſhall live in the other World! Yea, the Life of Man in our days is exceeding ſhort, if compared with the Lives of the Antediluvian Fathers. There are but a few ſteps between our Cradles and our Graves: They who live longeſt in the Body

Body live but a little time; but how ſhort is the Continuance of ſome in this World, who are cut off in their flouriſhing Age, in the Morning of their Days! We are all haſtily marching to Eternity, and ſhall ſhortly come to our Journey's end.

2. Becauſe of its Weakneſs and Frailty. Tabernacles were but ſlightly built, very weak and infirm Structures; they were not made of durable Matter, nor fix'd upon ſtrong Foundations. Our Bodies, thoſe Houſes of Clay wherein our Souls reſide, are ſaid to have their Foundation in the Duſt, *Job* 4. 19. The Strength of a Building lies very much in its Foundation; and that Edifice which hath but weak Walls, being ſtrongly founded, may laſt long; but when the Building is weak, and the Foundation weak alſo, in how tottering a Condition is ſuch a Fabrick? The Foundation of Man's Body is Sand or Duſt, and the word ſignifies unſtable moveable Duſt, ſuch as lies upon the Surface of the Earth, and is carried away with every puff of Wind. Man in his beſt Eſtate is altogether Vanity on the account of his Corporal Frailty and Weakneſs; his Strength is not as the Strength of Braſs or of Stones, but he is like a Reed ſhaken with the Wind. How ſmall a matter will make a Change and Alteration in the Body! How ſoon will the Guſt of a violent Diſtemper, like a furious Wind, blow it down to the Ground! So weak is the Body, that we have more cauſe to wonder at its ſtanding ſo long, than at its falling ſo ſoon.

2*dly*. We may obſerve the Epithet which the Apoſtle gives to the Body, *Earthly*; it is an Earthly Houſe or Tabernacle. This Epithet may be given it upon a fourfold Account.

1. Upon

1. Upon the account of the Matter whereof it is formed. It is made of Earth, Clay or Duſt. The ſacred Hiſtorian tells us, That *the Lord God formed Man of the Duſt of the Ground*, Gen.2.7. and that the Woman was formed of a Rib taken out of the Man's Body, *ver.* 22. When the great Jehovah came to paſs Sentence upon Man for the Breach of his Law, he put him in mind of his Original and Frame, as to his Corporeal Part; *Duſt thou art, out of it waſt thou taken*; Gen. 3. 19. And if our firſt Parents were formed of the Duſt, we who are their Off-ſpring were formed of their Subſtance, and proceeded from their Loins, muſt be alſo formed of the ſame Matter. *Elihu* acknowledges that he was formed out of the Clay, *Job* 33.6. The Pſalmiſt tells us, That *God knoweth our Frame, he remembreth that we are Duſt*, Pſal. 103. 14. our Bodies are breathing Clay, animated Earth.

2. Upon the account of its Situation, or the Place wherein it is pitched: It dwells in, it is erected upon the Earth. Tho Angelick Spirits were originally placed in the ſuperiour World, Heaven was their firſt Habitation; yet the Human Body was lodged in the Earth at its firſt Formation, this is the place of its Reſidence, and muſt be while in its preſent State and Condition. *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*; 1 Cor. 15. 50. Heaven is too pure an Air for our Animal Bodies to breath in, till they ſhall be purified and refined, and endued with thoſe excellent Qualities which will fit them for ſuch a noble Region. Therefore ſo long as our Souls continue in our Bodies, they have but an Earthly Lodging; tho their Motions and Operations may reach to Heaven, yet their Eſſential Reſidence is in the Earth: on this account *while we are preſent in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord*, 2 Cor.5. 16. While we dwell in this Tabernacle, we ſojourn in a polluted and trouble-

troubleſome World, a place to which Sin hath introduced the greateſt Diſorder and Confuſion, where Iniquity abounds, and where many Occaſions of Grief are continually miniſtred to us; a Vale of Tears, a Field of War, a Stage of Contention, and a waſte and howling Wilderneſs.

3. Upon the account of thoſe Means whereby it is ſupported and refreſhed. Our Bodies in their preſent State would immediately fall if they were not propp'd up and repair'd by Earthly Comforts, *viz.* Meat, Drink, Phyſick and Raiment. All the Conveniences of Life which we value and prize, which we induſtriouſly labour for, and after which our Affections do often run in an immoderate degree, are nothing better than Earth. An Earthly Body is only capable of Earthly Enjoyments.

4. Upon the account of its Diſpoſure and Reſolution. When Death rends the Soul from the Embraces of the Body, then the Duſt returns to the Earth as it was, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. it is turned into common Earth, and laid in a Bed of Duſt. Thus much for the Deſcription of the State and Condition of the Human Body in this Life. I proceed,

Secondly; To the ſecond thing contain'd in the words, *viz.* An implicite Aſſertion of its Diſſolution; *If it were diſſolved.*

Tho the conditional Conjunction ἐὰν *if*, is here made uſe of, yet it doth not import any Heſitation or Doubt in the Apoſtle's Mind concerning the Diſſolution of his Body, as if it were uncertain, whether it ſhould be diſſolved or not; but that Conjunction hath the ſame Signification here with the Adverb ὅταν *when*, and ſo the words may be render'd thus, *When our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved.* We find that this Particle hath the ſame Signification,

Joh. 16. 7. 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. ſo that theſe words do amount to an Aſſertion of the Body's Diſſolution: For what Comfort could ariſe to the Apoſtle and his Fellow-Sufferers from the Thoughts of their Entrance into an Heavenly Habitation after the Diſſolution of their Bodies, if they were not aſſured that ſome time or other they ſhould be diſſolved? We read of a twofold Diſſolution made by Death in Sacred Writ, *viz.* a Diſſolution of the Perſon or the Man, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I deſire to depart*, or, as the original word may properly be render'd, *to be diſſolved*; this conſiſts in the Separation of the Soul from the Body: and a Diſſolution of the Body, in my Text. This is a Metaphor taken from the Deſtruction of Buildings, the Overthrow of Earthly Fabricks: When a Structure is demoliſhed, it is ſaid to be diſſolved; for ſo the Original Word whereby the Ruine of the Temple is expreſt, *Mat.* 24. 2. *Mark* 13. 2. moſt properly ſignifies. In Alluſion hereunto the Death of the Body is called its Diſſolution. Now purſuant to the Metaphor ſeveral things are imply'd in the Body's Diſſolution.

1. The Continuance of its Matter after Death. When an Houſe is demoliſhed, tho it loſeth its Form, yet the Matter ſtill remains, it is not annihilated. The Matter of the Human Body paſſeth through various Changes after Death, yet it is not reduced to nothing; for if it were, at the great Day there could not be a Reſurrection, but a new Creation of Human Bodies: Whereas the Scripture aſſures us that the ſame Body which dies ſhall live and riſe again: Tho it may be accidentally and with reſpect to its Qualities another Body, yet it will be eſſentially, and with reſpect to its Subſtance, the ſame.

2. The Deſtruction of its Form. When a Building falls, its Form is loſt, tho its Matter remains; the ſame

Effect

Effect doth Death produce in the Body. Herein theſe two things may be comprehended.

(1.) The loſs of its Beauty and Comelineſs. What Beauty is there in the Rubbiſh of the moſt ſplendid and ſtately Palace? Surely there is nothing in it that can attract the Admiration and Eſteem of thoſe who behold it. They who delighted to view and walk in a Houſe while ſtanding, will turn their Eyes from its Ruines. The Beauty of the moſt amiable Body becomes a Prey to Death, when it is ſeized by this mighty Conqueror. Death draws a diſmal Vail over all its Glory, and makes very unlovely and deforming Impreſſions on it. The Bodies of our deceaſed Relatives which we formerly beheld with great Delight, would be now very unpleaſant Spectacles to us; we cannot without Regret turn our Eyes towards the Corps of our deareſt Friend, but are willing ſoon to bury it out of our Sight.

(2.) The loſs of its Excellency and Uſefulneſs. What Value is there in the Rubbiſh of a fallen Sructure, which while ſtanding was worth many thouſands, or what uſe can it ſerve for? Tho a living Body is exceeding valuable, yet a dead Body is of no more Worth than common Earth, and it is as uſeleſs and unprofitable. The Eyes, Tongue, Hands and Feet, which were all active Members, and perform'd many Operations, when ſeized by Death become wholly unactive, they loſe their Motion and Activity when bound with its Adamantine Chains and Fetters. Thoſe Bodies of our Relations which were very ſerviceable to us while in the Land of the Living, can do us no good when numbred among the Dead.

3. In the Diſſolution of the Body may be imply'd its entrance into the Grave, and corrupting there. A ſtanding Houſe is raiſed above the Ground, but a fallen Houſe

lies level with it, and the Materials thereof are ſeparated and divided. When Mens Bodies die, they are laid in the Grave, which is the Houſe appointed for all living: They enter into the place of Silence and of Darkneſs, and there they moulder away, and crumble to Duſt.

4. Herein may be implied the various ways whereby the Structure of the Human Body decays, and is deſtroyed. Some Buildings fall down of themſelves, Time, the Conſumer of all material Things upon the Earth, deſtroys them; other Fabricks are blown down by violent Winds, others fall by the force of devouring Flames, and others are demoliſh'd by Men. In like manner ſome Mens Bodies may be ſaid even to fall of themſelves, becauſe no internal Diſtemper, nor external Violence is the Cauſe of their Diſſolution; old Age hath dried up their natural Moiſture, exhauſted their Strength, and brought them down to the Duſt; their Life was like a Lamp that goes out when there is no more Oil to feed it. The Bodies of others are deſtroyed by the immediate Stroke of God's Hand, ſome Bodies are burnt up by the Heat, or blown down by the Blaſt of violent Diſtempers, others fall by Human Force and Violence.

That our Bodies muſt be diſſolved we have a ſacred Aſſurance from the God that made them: He hath told us that the Body muſt return to the Earth from whence it came, that he will bring us to Death and to the Grave, which is appointed for all living. *It is appointed for all Men once to die*, Heb. 9. 27. This Appointment is accompliſhed upon our Fellow-Creatures every day; *Man goes to his long Home, and the Mourners continually walk about the Streets:* Yea many of our dear Relatives have been rent from our Embraces, and hurried into the gloomy Territories of the King of Terrors; ſome whoſe Bodies were ſtronger than ours,

ours, and ſeem'd more able to hold out againſt a beſieging Enemy. Do not the continual totterings and ſhakings of our Earthly Tabernacles, and the frequent Repairs which they ſtand in need of, portend their Downfal? So that the living may many ways know that they muſt die.

Thirdly; I proceed to that Deſcription which the Apoſtle gives of the bleſſed State and Habitation of the Saints after Death. *We have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

The Apoſtle carries on the ſame Metaphor in the latter part, which he made uſe of in the former part of the Verſe. As he compares the Soul's Reſidence in the Body to that of an Inhabitant in an Houſe, ſo he repreſents the Glory and Felicity of the Soul, after the Diſſolution of the Body, by its Entrance into and Abode in a more glorious Habitation. But what this Houſe is whereof the Apoſtle ſpeaks, is not yet agreed among Expoſitors: Some do thereby underſtand the ſame Body, which the Soul now dwells in, and muſt be diſlodged from; when raiſed again at the laſt day. Others think the Apoſtle intends that Glory and Bleſſedneſs into which the Souls of Believers enter immediately after their Separation from their Bodies. It is certainly true that the Earthly Tabernacles of the Saints ſhall not always lie in the Duſt, that the Divorce between their Souls and them will not be perpetual, but they ſhall be raiſed from their Graves, and reaſſumed by their antient Poſſeſſors; and then the Soul will have a more noble Habitation than now it hath, the Body will be much more excellent and glorious than it is in its Mortal State: And it is as certain that the Soul will not be without an Habitation when it is by its great Landlord turned out of its Earthly Houſe, but will enter into the bliſsful Regions above. I conceive the latter

to

to be principally intended: for the Apoſtle comforts himſelf with the well-grounded Hopes of that Glory to which Death would introduce him; *When our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle is diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe*, &c. *i. e.* we ſhall enter into it and become Poſſeſſors of it: And in the following Verſes he expreſſeth a vehement Deſire to be diſcharged from his Body, that he might enter into this Houſe; now he would partake of the Glory of the Reſurrection never the ſooner for his ſpeedy Diſſolution, the Bodies of all the Saints will be raiſed and glorified at the ſame time. However I ſhall not exclude but include the former Senſe in my farther Diſcourſe of theſe words, wherein we have a twofold Account of this Building or Houſe, *viz.* Negative and Affirmative.

1. Negative: It is *a Building, an Houſe not made with Hands.* This Character agrees to the glorious Habitation of the Saints above, in oppoſition to all Terrene Structures. The ſplendid Palaces wherein Earthly Monarchs dwell, were contrived by Human Skill, and fram'd by the Hands of Men, and conſequently all their Excellency and Glory is of a carnal and ſenſible Nature. The Tabernacle in the Wilderneſs was contriv'd by God himſelf, and yet becauſe Man had an Hand in the Erection thereof, it is ſaid to be made with Hands, *Heb.* 9. 11, 24. But that glorious Houſe in which the Saints ſhall dwell when they leave their Bodies, was neither contriv'd by Human Art, nor fram'd by Human Strength; no Creature was inſtrumental to the Erection of that ſtately Fabrick, and the Glory thereof is not of a carnal and ſenſible Nature: And the Saints Bodies at the Reſurrection may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be made without Hands, in oppoſition to thoſe Bodies which they now carry about with them; becauſe, tho theſe Structures will

will be materially the ſame that now they are, yet there will be an accidental Alteration in them; and whereas Man was inſtrumental to their firſt Production, (tho God only was their principal Efficient) yet they ſhall be raiſed again by the immediate Operation of God. It is obſervable, that the Human Body of our bleſſed Lord is called a Tabernacle not made with Hands, *Heb.* 9. 11. not only in contra-diſtinction from the Jewiſh Tabernacle, but alſo from all other Human Bodies, becauſe no active Principle but Divine Power produced it.

2. This Building or Houſe is deſcribed Affirmatively, and that from three things: Its Efficient, its Situation, and its Duration.

(1.) It is deſcribed from its Efficient, *God*; it is a *Building of God:* The Prepoſition ἐκ to which God is ſubjoined, denotes the Efficient Cauſe. The Excellency of any Building is ſutable to its Contriver and Builder. Seeing Divine Wiſdom and Power infinitely ſurpaſs Human, ſurely the Works of God's Hands muſt tranſcend the Works of Mens Hands. The glorious Place above is called a City *whoſe Builder and Maker is God*; Heb. 11. 10. Now this World which is the Saints preſent Habitation, being made by God, ſurely ſomething more muſt be intended by his Erection of this Houſe, than the immediate Creation thereof by him. It can import nothing leſs, than that the Divine Being hath exerted more of his Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, in this than in any other Fabrick which he hath erected; and that the Bleſſedneſs of the Triumphant Saints is more immediately derived from God, than any thing that is enjoyed in a Mortal State. And there will be a more admirable diſplay of the Divine Glory in the Reſurrection of the Saints Bodies, than there was in their Creation, they will become as glorious and perfect as Human Bodies can be.

(2.) From

(2.) From its Situation, *in the Heavens.* It is obſervable, that ſome words are in the New Teſtament put in the Plural inſtead of the Singular Number, particularly οὐρανοὶ Heavens, for οὐρανὸς Heaven, *Mat.* 12. 25. in my Text, and ſeveral other places, with a Deſign (as I conceive) emphatically to denote the Excellency and Glory of that lofty Region. Not the Aerial or Ætherial, but the Imperial Heaven is here intended. This is a place far ſuperior to the Earth, and therefore an Entrance into and Abode in it, is ſometimes mentioned as comprehenſive of all that Felicity which is poſſeſt by thoſe that inhabit it. When the Soul of a Believer quits its Earthly Tabernacle, it mounts up as on Eagle's Wings to the Heavenly Temple. This is the Habitation of God's Holineſs, there the great Jehovah in a ſpecial manner dwells, there are the brighteſt Diſcoveries of the Divine Splendor, and the higheſt Adorations given to his moſt Excellent Majeſty: There the glorified Courtiers do not behold him through a Glaſs darkly, but ſee him face to face. In that Building dwells and reigns the Lord Jeſus, the Mediator of the New Covenant: When we ſhall *be abſent from the Body, we ſhall be preſent with the Lord,* 2 Cor. 5. 8. The Heaven muſt receive him until the times of reſtitution of all things. There dwell an innumerable company of glorious Angels, far more glorious than any of the Princes of this World; and all the Spirits of Juſt Men that are made perfect. This is not an Habitation of Violence and Oppreſſion, for no unclean thing can enter there. The Inhabitants of this Houſe are out of the reach of Satan and his malicious Off-ſpring; they are not expos'd to the Hoſtile Attempts of the roaring Lion of Hell, or his Whelps upon Earth: They are liable to no troubleſome Changes, Heart-breaking Exerciſes, perplexing Diſappointments, corroding Cares, or ſinful Infirmities. This

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is a delectable and ſecure Habitation, here is fulneſs of Joy, here are Rivers of Pleaſures which conſtantly refreſh the glorified Soul. In this Houſe is Light without Darkneſs, Day without Night, Joy without Sorrow, and Singing without Weeping. The Soul that enters into this Houſe hath the moſt intimate Fellowſhip with God the Maſter of it, and a refreſhing Communion with the bleſſed Angels and Saints who cohabit with it therein: All things in this Houſe are ſutable to the Grandure and Magnificence of the Structure. And when the Saints Bodies ſhall come forth from their Houſes of Silence and Darkneſs, and be reunited to their Souls, they ſhall be received together with them into the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and ſhall ſhare with them in the Felicity of that bleſſed Seat.

(3.) It is deſcribed from its Duration, *Eternal.*

This I conceive is predicated of this Heavenly Habitation in oppoſition to the Frailty of our Earthly Tabernacles, which muſt be diſſolved, and then all our Temporal Comforts and Delights will vaniſh, we ſhall no longer enjoy them.

The Celeſtial City hath immoveable Foundations, it is ſubject to no Decay or Diſſolution, its Duration will run parallel with the Ages of Eternity: And the Glory of that Place will laſt as long as the Place it ſelf; it is called a never-fading Crown, an Incorruptible Inheritance, and an Everlaſting Kingdom. The Divine Being, in the Viſion and Fruition of whom the Happineſs of glorified Saints principally conſiſts, is to everlaſting. Moreover, their Abode in this Houſe will be as laſting as the Building, they ſhall never be diſpoſſeſt of, or expell'd from it. Tho the firſt *Adam* was driven out of an Earthly Paradiſe, yet the ſpiritual Seed and Off-ſpring of the ſecond *Adam* ſhall never be expell'd the Heavenly One: And when their Bodies

ſhall riſe from their Beds of Duſt, they will live to die no more; Death will have no Power to demoliſh theſe curious Fabricks, for it ſhall be ſwallowed up in Victory, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. *This Mortal ſhall then put on Immortality.* Tho a little time waſtes and conſumes our Bodies in their preſent State, yet there ſhall be no Diminution of their Excellency and Beauty in an endleſs Eternity, when we become the Children of the Reſurrection: Theſe Buildings will be always kept in their Vigor and Glory, by the immediate Power of the ſupream Architect. I proceed,

Fourthly; To the comfortable Knowledg and Aſſurance which the Apoſtle and other Chriſtians had concerning their preſent Right to, and future Fruition of this Bleſſedneſs; *We know.*

Herein we may conſider the Subject *We*, and the Predicate *know.*

1. The Subject, *We.* The Apoſtle here ſpeaks only of thoſe that were real Chriſtians, who had ſincerely cloſed with, and were united to the bleſſed Jeſus, they only have a Right and Title to, and therefore they only have ground to expect and hope for, this glorious Habitation. They who come not under ſuch a Character, have reaſon to fear that when their Earthly Tabernacles ſhall be diſſolved, their Souls will enter into a different Habitation. An Houſe indeed contrived by infinite Wiſdom, and framed by Almighty Power, and an eternal Houſe, but not in Heaven, but in Hell; an Houſe where there is Blackneſs of Darkneſs, inconceiveable Grief, and intolerable Torment; an Houſe prepared for the Devil and his Angels, wherein the Wicked muſt cohabit with and be tormented by thoſe Apoſtate Spirits who left their Primitive Habitation, for evermore: An Houſe wherein they ſhall be Exiles from God's comfort-

comfortable Preſence, and every thing that is either really good, or eſteemed ſo by them. But I conceive the Apoſtle ſpeaks not here of all Saints; for tho they may know and have ground to hope that when their Souls are diſlodged from their Bodies, they ſhall enter into this bliſsful Habitation, yet all Believers have not attained to this Knowledg and Aſſurance thereof; Clouds and Darkneſs do overſpread ſome gracious Souls, and they are filled with many Doubts and Fears concerning their ſpiritual and eternal State. But he ſpeaks concerning himſelf and ſome other Chriſtians, who had attained to, and were in the Exerciſe of this Knowledg. This leads me to the ſecond thing, *viz.*

2. The Predicate, *know*. This Knowledg here ſpoken of, is a certain Knowledg, a firm and full Perſwaſion that when their Bodies ſhould be diſſolved, their Souls ſhould be received into Heaven. There are ſeveral things included in this Knowledg, *viz.* a firm Belief of a future State of Bleſſedneſs provided for the Saints, and into which they ſhall enter after Death. This might be known from the Holy Scriptures, wherein we have a ſufficient Confirmation of this ſacred Truth. Moreover, a firm Perſwaſion that they were intereſted in Chriſt, and made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. This they might know by comparing themſelves with thoſe Marks and Characters of the Heirs of Salvation which were laid down in ſacred Writ, by the lively exerciſe of their Faith upon Chriſt, and by the Teſtimony of the holy Spirit, bearing witneſs with their Spirits that they were the Children of God. Laſtly, an Aſſurance of their Preſervation in a State of Grace to a State of Glory. This they might fairly collect from the Word of God, wherein there is a full account of the Everlaſtingneſs of the Covenant of Grace, the Immutability of Divine Love,

the Efficacy of Chriſt's Death, together with the Conſtancy and Prevalence of his Interceſſion, and the perpetual Reſidence of the holy Spirit (the Earneſt of the Heavenly Inheritance) in his Royal Palaces, and holy Temples. Our Apoſtle expreſſeth the like Aſſurance, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judg ſhall give me at that day.* Holy *Job* alſo expreſt his Aſſurance of future Glory in his adverſe State, *Job* 19. 25, 26, 27. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the Earth. And tho after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God,* &c. Tho all who have a Faith of Affiance do not attain to a Faith of Aſſurance, yet it is attainable in a Mortal State. Thus much by way of Explication.

II. I ſhall preſent you with ſome Inferences from the Words.

Firſt; I infer, The prodigious Folly of thoſe who give their Bodies the Preference to their Souls. It is the part of a wiſe Man, to value things in proportion to their Worth and Excellency. But the generality of Mankind ſhow that their Corporeal Part hath a greater ſhare of their Eſteem than their Spiritual Part: They carefully provide Food and Raiment for the former, but never ſeek after the Bread of Life to feed, and the Robe of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs to array the latter. They will labour hard to erect or purchaſe a comfortable Habitation for their Bodies, but do not at all endeavour to ſecure an happy Dwelling-place for their Souls when they enter into an inviſible World: They will hazard the loſs of their Souls to ſecure their Bodies from Temporal Evils, or to procure thoſe things which

which will gratify the ſenſitive Appetite. What Madneſs is it to prefer a Clod of Earth to a Spirit? Is not that a fooliſh Soul that values its ſojourning-place more than it ſelf, and will expoſe it ſelf to eternal Ruine for the Preſervation of its Earthly Tabernacle? What ſtupid Fools are they who eſteem their Bodies, which are continually advancing towards, and muſt ſpeedily return to the Duſt, more than their Souls which ſhall ſurvive them, and live for evermore? Surely ſuch Perſons are as the Horſe, or as the Mule, which have no Underſtanding.

Secondly, I infer, The Folly of thoſe who are proud of, or glory in their Corporeal Strength or Beauty. As Men are apt to boaſt of the exact Form and Strength of thoſe Houſes wherein their Bodies dwell, ſo likewiſe of the Excellency of thoſe Bodies wherein their Souls tabernacle. But this will appear very fooliſh to us, if we conſider our Frame, and remember that we are Duſt. Our Bodies were formed of the ſame Matter for kind that we trample under our Feet, and diſdain to touch with our Fingers. Tho our Bodies are very robuſt, yet they are but Earthen Veſſels, and will ſoon be broken to pieces. In a very ſhort time our Bodies muſt be diſſolved, and then all their Beauty and Strength will vaniſh and become a Prey to the King of Terrors.

Thirdly, I infer, The Vanity of placing our Happineſs in our living Comforts, our near and dear Relations.

We are exceeding prone to let out our Affections immoderately towards them, to give them too high a Place, too large a Room in our Hearts, to think our ſelves happy in an Husband, Wife, or Children, not conſidering they are frail mortal Creatures. They can be no longer enjoy'd by us than while their Souls continue in their Bodies, and thoſe

thoſe curious Fabricks, which we behold with Pleaſure and Delight, keep their Station. Did we ſeriouſly conſider what frail brittle Houſes their Souls inhabit, how ſoon they may be demoliſhed, and in how ſhort a time they ſhall be diſlodged from them, we ſhould ſee it highly reaſonable to moderate our Affections towards them! O let the everliving, everlaſting God be the Darling of our Souls, and the Soveraign of our Affections.

Fourthly, I infer, How neceſſary it is for us all ſpeedily to endeavour after a Right and Title to an Heavenly Habitation. To confirm this Aſſertion, and to preſs you to this Duty, I ſhall offer theſe things that follow to your Conſideration.

1. Your Souls are deſigned to a perpetual Reſidence in ſome Habitation. The Father of Spirits hath reſolved to preſerve the Being and Life of your Souls for evermore, no Period ſhall ever be put to their Exiſtence; and therefore when they leave their preſent Habitation, they muſt enter into another. There are but two Receptacles of departed Souls, *viz.* an Heavenly Paradiſe, and an Infernal Lake: when your immortal Spirits are divorced from your Bodies, they muſt either aſcend to the former, or deſcend to the latter. And how can you bear to think of dwelling with conſuming Fire, and abiding with everlaſting Burnings?

2. Your Bodies ſhall enter into the ſame Habitation, when re-aſſumed by your Souls, into which your Souls enter when diveſted of your Bodies. Where-ever your Souls go after Death, there will your Bodies be diſpoſed after the Reſurrection. If the noble Inhabitant dwells in Heaven, the Houſe that it dwelt in upon Earth when rebuilt ſhall be fixt in that glorious Region, this Earthly Taber-

Tabernacle ſhall become a Celeſtial Structure; but if it be caſt into Hell, the raiſed Body muſt ſtand in that direful Priſon as an everlaſting Monument of Divine Wrath. By making Proviſion for your Souls, you will alſo ſecure the Felicity of your Bodies; their true Intereſt is inſeparable.

3. How terrible will the Agonies of Death be to us, if we ſee our ſelves deſtitute of a Title to Eternal Life? They who have diſregarded their future State, when the evil day of Death ſeem'd to be at a diſtance from them, have had very aweful and terrible Thoughts about it, when it hath made ſenſible Approaches to them. With what Horror will your Souls be ſeiſed, when Death ſits upon your quivering Lips, if you apprehend that they ſhall be ſpeedily expelled your Bodies, and eternally excluded the Heavenly Building!

4. This Life is the only time for ſecuring an Intereſt in this glorious Habitation. As the Tree falls, ſo it muſt eternally lie: Death will fix us in an unalterable and unchangeable State. Thoſe Spirits that are now in Priſon will find no place for Repentance, tho they ſhould ſeek it with Tears.

5. The time of our Souls Reſidence in our Bodies is very uncertain. Perſons are very apt to defer this weighty and important Buſineſs; ſome put it off to old Age, others to a Sick-bed; ſome think it will be time enough to ſeek after another Habitation when the Strength of their Earthly Tabernacles decays, and they feel them ſhake and totter: Our Lives will be but ſhort at longeſt, and how ſhort they will be we know not. Some are cut off in the Morning of their Days, others in their full Strength: we are not ſure that Age will ſnow upon our Heads before they are laid in the Duſt, or that the Structure of our Bodies will by any loud Crack give us notice of its Downfal. Some Bodies

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are demoliſhed by a ſpeedy and ſudden Stroke, their Souls are turn'd out of them without any warning. Let us therefore ſpeedily ſeek that City which is above.

Would you, O Sinners, get a Title to this Habitation? then come to Chriſt, and ſincerely cloſe with him: It is not to be purchaſed with your Money, nor procured by your Labour; if you accept of Jeſus, you ſhall freely receive it; if you perſiſt in your ſtubborn Rejection of him, you ſhall never obtain it. Heaven is a purchaſed Poſſeſſion, Chriſt hath bought it with the invaluable Price of his precious Blood; and if he become yours, that ſhall be yours alſo: You will have a ſure Title to it which can never be loſt, but will iſſue in an actual Poſſeſſion of it. If you lay hold of Chriſt with the Hand of Faith while you live, you may ſecurely commit your Souls into his Hands when you come to die, and ſay with expiring *Stephen*, Acts 7. 59. *Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit.*

Fifthly, I infer, That Saints ſhould diligently endeavour to get an Aſſurance of the happy Diſpoſure of their Souls after their Separation from their Bodies. This is not unattainable by them, this will not be unprofitable to them. It is their Duty to labour after it, and an Attainment to it will be very beneficial and advantagious to them. This will comfort them under all the Frailties and Infirmities, the Periſhings and Decays of their outward Man, and mightily ſweeten all the Troubles and Afflictions wherewith they are exerciſed during their continuance in it. This will familiarize Death, and render its Approach welcome to them. Death is terrible to Nature; the Soul is naturally unwilling to leave its old dwelling-place, Nature cannot but abhor a Diſſolution, beſides violent Pains do ordinarily attend the taking down of this Earthly Structure. But they

they can embrace the King of Terrors with Joy and holy Triumph, who are able to ſay with the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that Day.* We ought to *give Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure; for ſo an Entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto us abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11. But if we want this Aſſurance, we cannot comfortably walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

But what Trouble will poſſeſs our Spirits, if when our Souls are going to be unclothed of their Earthly Houſe, we know not whether ever they ſhall be clothed upon with an Houſe which is from Heaven! If when they are launching into Eternity, we know not whether they are entring into a bright or a black Eternity! In order to our obtaining this Aſſurance, let us ſeriouſly and diligently ſearch our Hearts and try our Ways, put forth direct Acts of Faith upon Chriſt, and beg of God to ſhed abroad his Love in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt.

Sixthly, I infer, What vaſt Obligations Believers are under to their Bleſſed Lord! How highly are they obliged to him, who deſcended from his Imperial Throne, tabernacled among us, dwelt in an Houſe of Clay, and ſubmitted to a Diſſolution, that he might procure for them an eternal Habitation with himſelf in the higheſt Heavens! By dying he conquered Death, ſo as to render it a bleſſed Gain and Advantage to them, and to give them cauſe to triumph over it in their ſharpeſt Encounter with it. How ſhould we love and live to that bleſſed Jeſus, through whom we are more than Conquerors over our laſt Enemy, who is gone to Heaven to prepare a Place

for us, and will receive us into it, that where he is there we may be alſo!

Seventhly, I infer, That a Believer's Converſation ought to be in Heaven. Shall we not be frequently converſant in that glorious Place, where we hope eternally to dwell? Seeing we are Strangers in the Earth, we ſhould live like thoſe who know they have no continuing City here. Let us endeavour frequently to mount up on the Wings of our Thoughts and Affections to the excellent Glory.

Laſtly, I infer, That the Saints have a ſolid Ground of Comfort under the Death of their godly Relatives. We cannot but mourn to ſee thoſe Structures wherein we took Pleaſure laid in the Duſt, and going to be a Feaſt for Worms; to think that we ſhall ſee the Deſire of our Eyes no more in this World. But ſhall we not be comforted when we conſider, that their Souls are gone into a far better Habitation than they dwelt in while they cohabited with us, that they have exchanged our Embraces for Chriſt's, that they are now triumphing and rejoicing in the Heavenly Manſions; that the Loſs is only ours; they are Gainers by their Departure, and e're long we ſhall go to them and dwell with them for evermore? I ſhall conclude with an Addreſs to the near Relations of our Deceaſed Friend.

I muſt acknowledg your Loſs to be very great; it is no ſmall Affliction, to be depriv'd of ſuch a loving Husband and indulgent Father, yet you ought not to mourn as thoſe who have no Hope. They who obſerv'd his Converſation, might from thence take knowledg that he had been with Jeſus: He adorn'd the Doctrin of God his Saviour; He was a burning and ſhining Light in the Place where Divine Provi-

Providence fixt him: Therefore you have no Ground to queſtion his Exchange of an Earthly for an Heavenly Habitation, and the Church Militant for the Triumphant Aſſembly of the Firſt-born. Were it put to his Choice, whether he would ſtay where he is, or return to you, he would prefer the former to the latter. You ought humbly and ſilently to acquieſce in God's Sovereign Will, who is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works, and to depend upon him who hath promiſed to be *an Husband to the Widow, and a Father to the Fatherleſs.* Let me exhort his Children to an Imitation of that excellent Example which he hath ſet them, and to a Remembrance of and Compliance with thoſe wholſome Inſtructions which he hath given them. Theſe Advantages you are now deprived of, but a ſerious Reflection upon them may be beneficial to you; if not, they will aggravate your Guilt. It had been better for you to have deſcended from a Turk or Pagan, than from ſuch an Eminent Chriſtian as your deceaſed Father was, if you prove degenerate Children. How ſad will it be, if he who put up ſo many Prayers for your Salvation before the Throne of Grace, ſhould teſtify againſt you to the Aggravation of your Condemnation before the Tribunal of Juſtice? He is gone before, you muſt follow after, how ſoon you know not: Death hath made three Breaches in your Family within the compaſs of a few Years, and ſhall not theſe frequent Warnings put you in mind of your own Change? O get an Intereſt in Chriſt! that will be more valuable than the Eſtate which your deceaſed Father hath bequeathed to you; ſo you may be able to ſay when you come to die, *We know, that if our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

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